United States Patent [19]

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[54] **GOLF TOOL AND CARRIER FOR GOLF ITEMS**

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[51] **Int. Cl.**[5] **A63B 57/00**

[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **273/32 B;** 273/32 A; 273/32 D; 224/918

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 273/32 A, 32 B, 32 R, 273/162 D, 162 F, 162 R; 224/918

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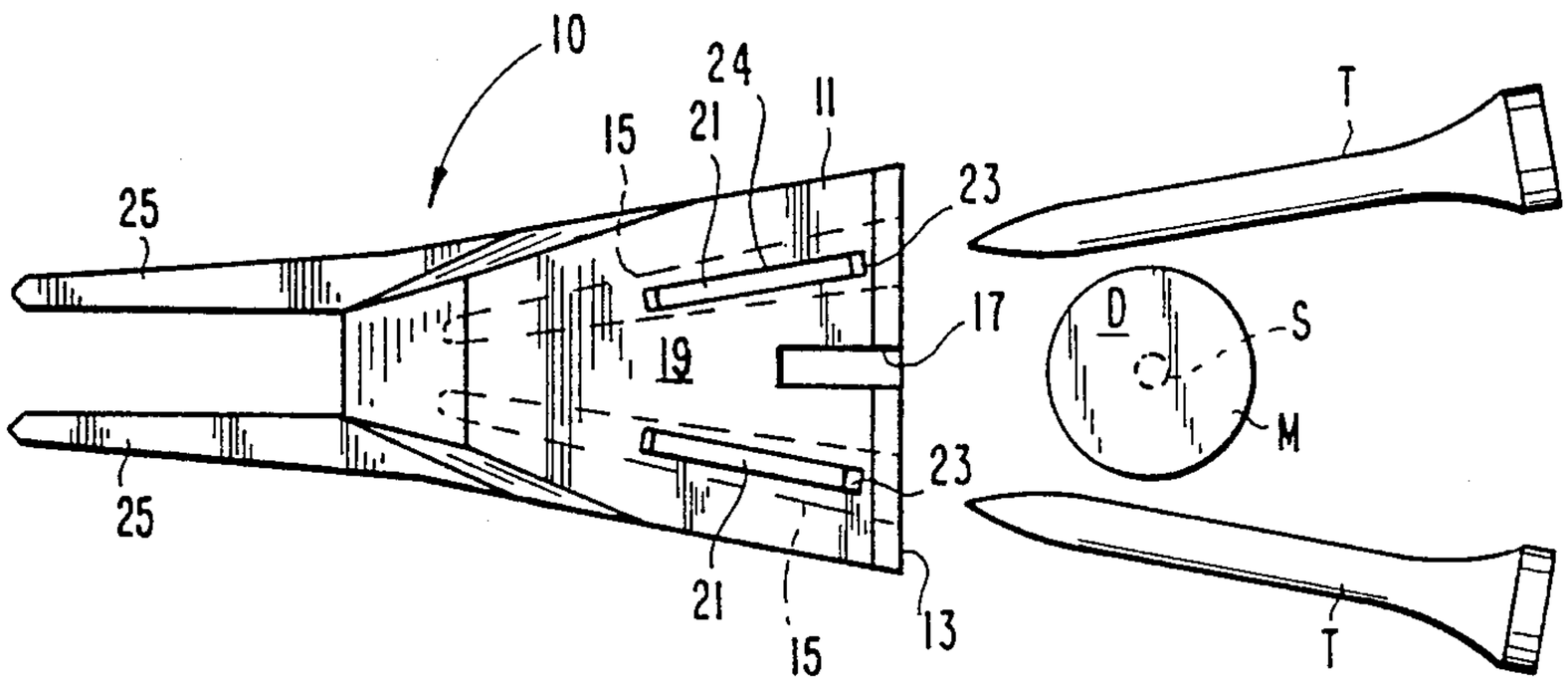
Primary Examiner—George J. Marlo

[57] **ABSTRACT**

A conveniently carried golf device combines a turf repair tool with a carrier for a pair of golf tees and a ball marker. The device includes a one-piece body formed with a pair of tee-receiving cavities in an end face of the body. The body is formed at another end into a turf repair tool including a pair of prongs. A belt clip is preferably integrally formed with the body at a bottom face of the body so that the device may be conveniently clipped to a pocket or belt of the golfer. In one embodiment, a pair of resilient clips are attached to the top face of the body. A slot is formed in the body to open at the top face and the end face. The slot is adapted to receive the stem of a ball marker therein. The resilient clips can be urged away from the top face to accept the disk of the ball marker and to retain the marker adjacent the top face. The ball marker can be readily removed by sliding the marker from the slot and past the resilient clips.

10 Claims, 3 Drawing Sheets



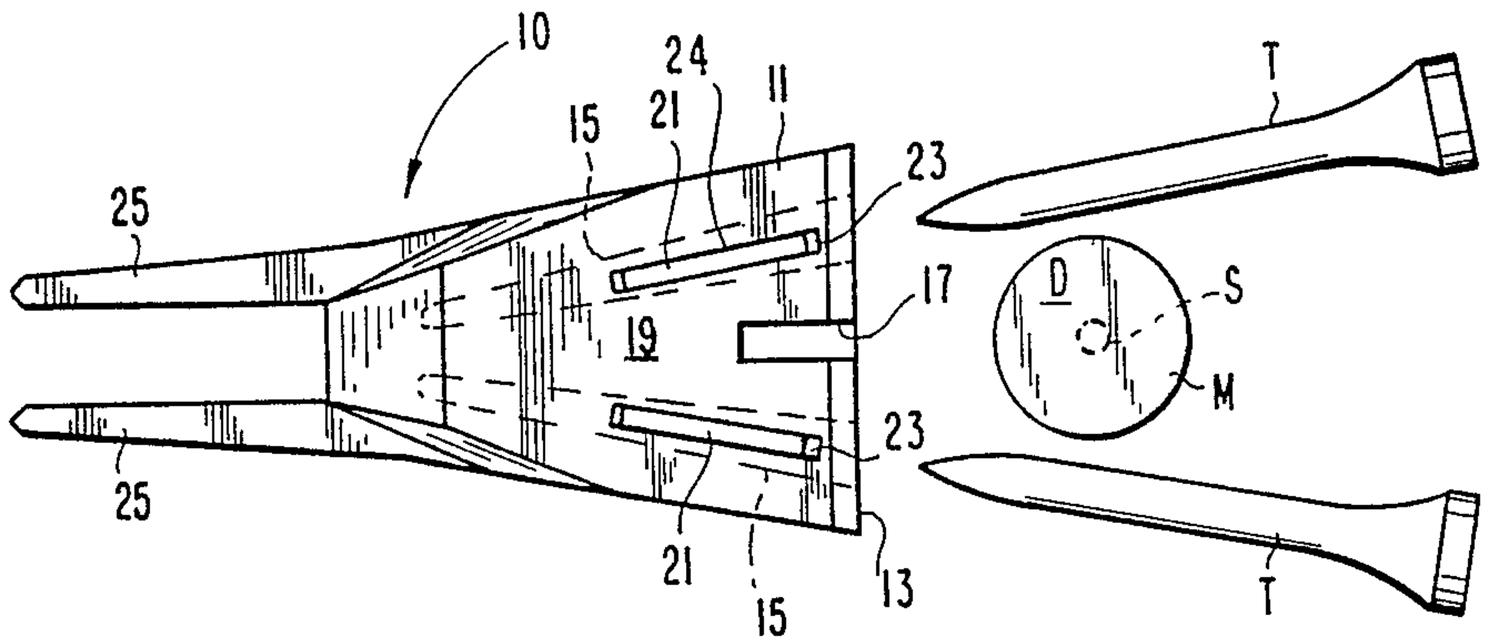


Fig. 1

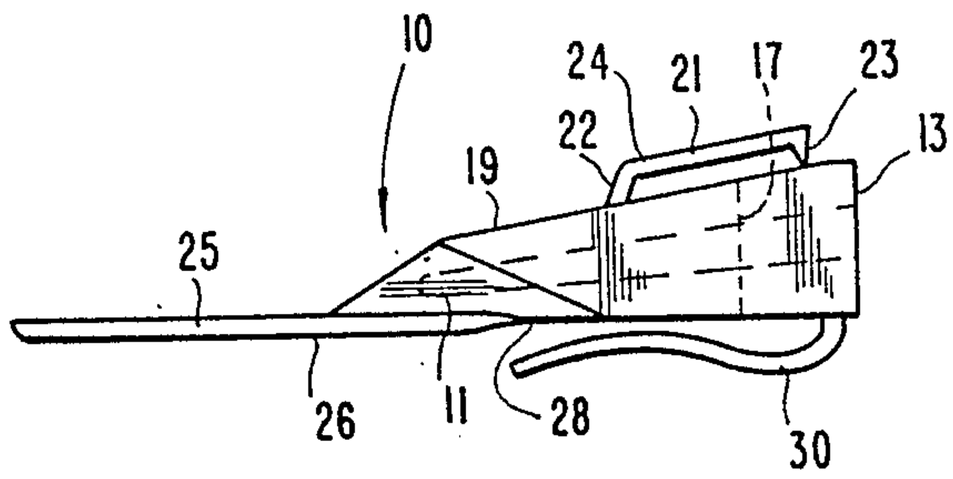


Fig. 2

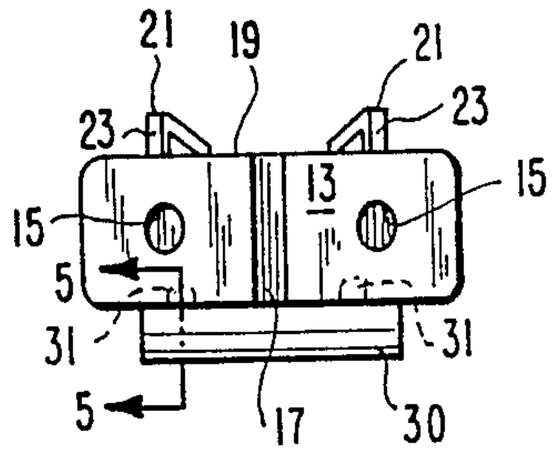


Fig. 3

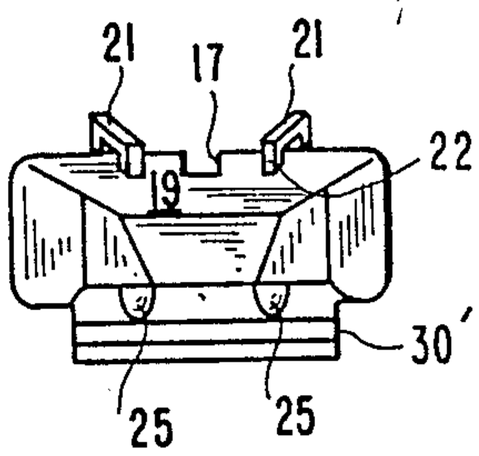


Fig. 4

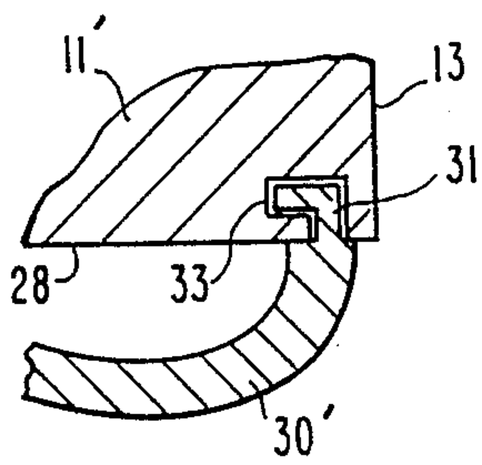


Fig. 5

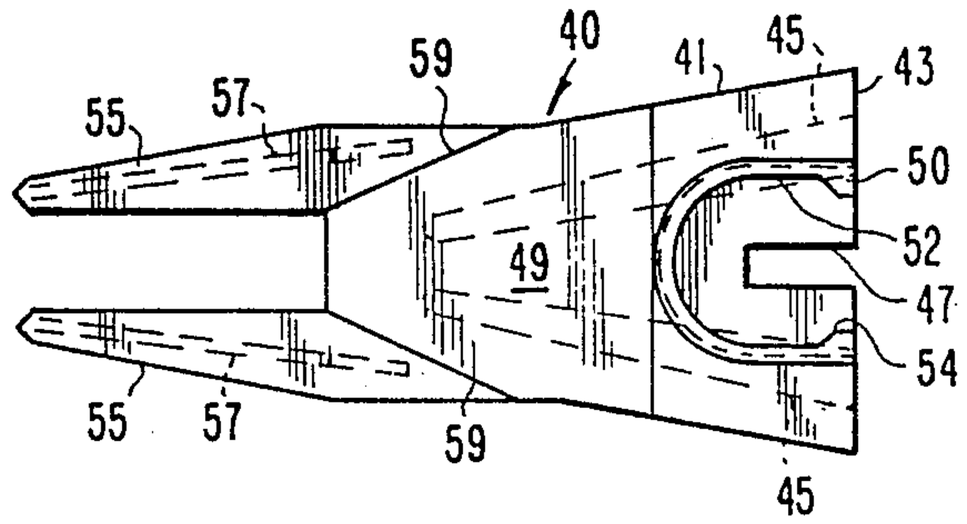


Fig.6

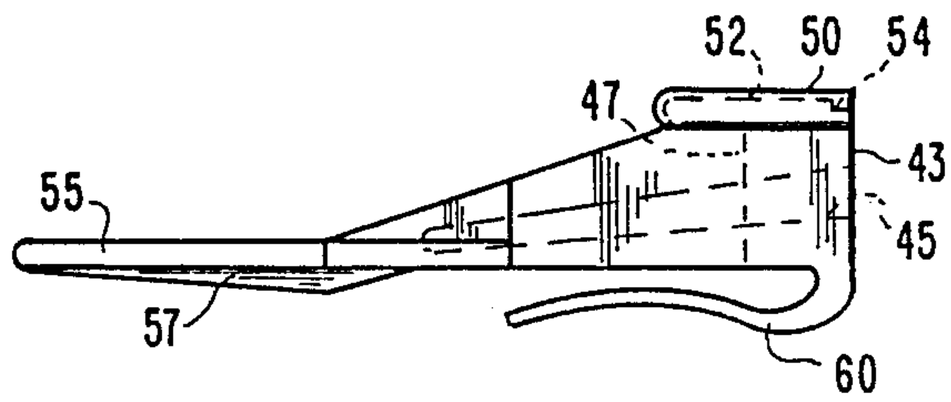


Fig.7

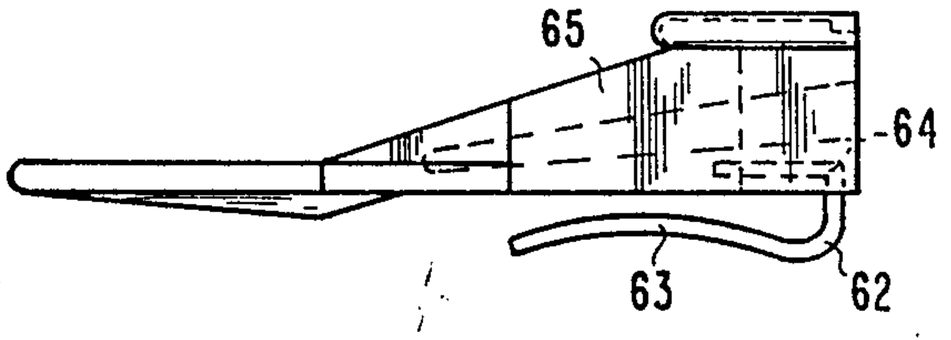


Fig.8

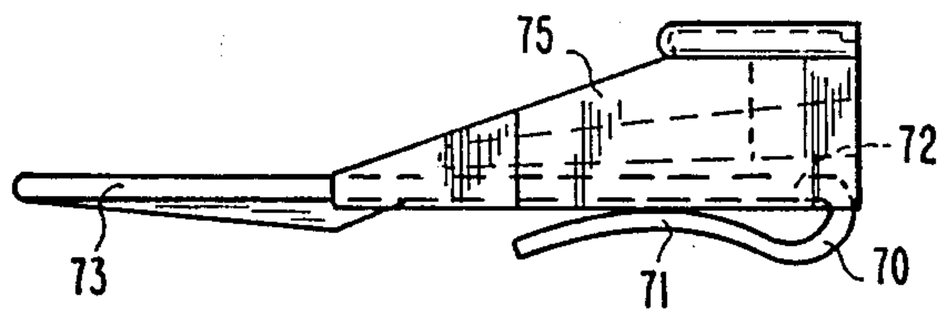


Fig.9

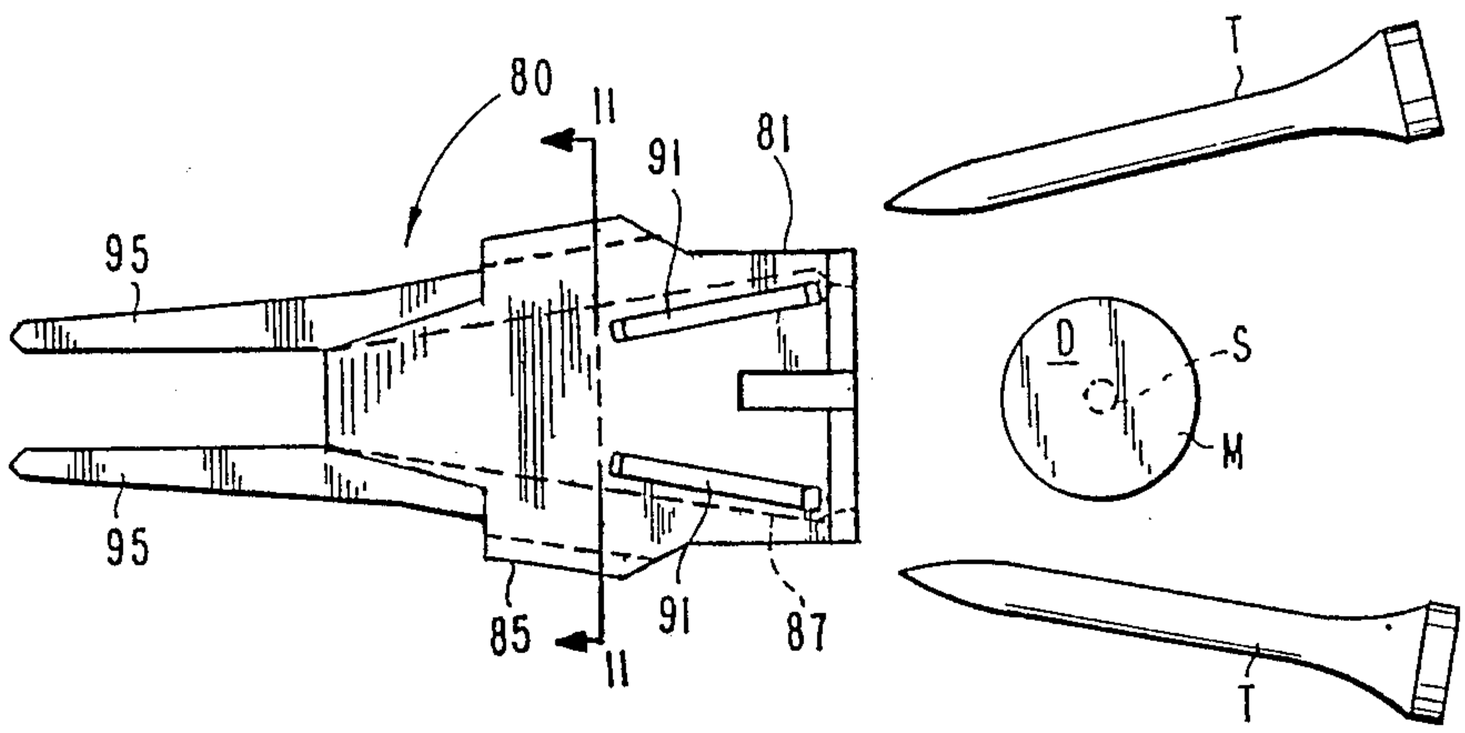


Fig. 10

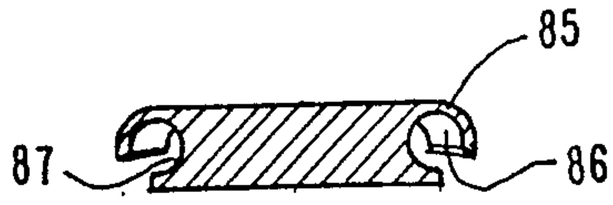


Fig. 11

GOLF TOOL AND CARRIER FOR GOLF ITEMS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to a device or aid for the game of golf, and more particularly to a device which combines a golf tool with a carrier for small items used by a golfer.

In order to play the game of golf, a golfer needs to keep certain items at hand. In particular, a golf tee is a virtual necessity, and many golfers carry a ball marker or ball spot. Golfing etiquette dictates that golfers also carry a turf or greens repair tool to repair small divots left in the green due to the impact of a well placed iron shot.

Many golfers carry a supply of tees, ball markers and a turf repair tool in their pockets. Some golfers use a ball marker that is snapped on to a typical golf glove. Because these items are small, it is often difficult for the golfer to locate a particular golf item, especially if the items are kept in a pocket.

Golf is a game that is loaded with annoyances - some provided by the course itself, and others are a result of the many problems that can plague a golfer (such as a troublesome slice or hook). It is therefore important that the golfer eliminate as many annoyances as possible that might disturb his or her concentration on the course. Having to fish through pockets in order to find the appropriate golf item is one annoyance that can be eliminated. Accordingly, one of the objects of the present invention is to provide a combination golf tool and carrier for golf items which is readily accessible to the golfers. Another object of the present invention is to provide such a device which is inexpensive and easy to manufacture.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

These and other objects of the present invention are attained in the provision of a golf device comprising a one-piece body having a top face, a bottom face and an end face. The device includes a turf repair tool including a pair of prongs extending from the body opposite the end face. The body has a number of elongated cavities extending from the end face into the body, each of the number of cavities being sized to snugly receive a golf tee therein. A slot is defined in the body which opens at the top face and at the end face for slidably receiving the stem of a ball marker therein. Means are provided for retaining the disk of the ball marker at the top face when the stem is within the slot, such as a pair of resilient retaining clips which are resiliently displaceable to permit insertion and removal of the ball marker disk from the golf device. A belt clip is attached to the one-piece body at the bottom face so that the device can be clipped to a belt of pocket.

Other objects and benefits of the present invention will become apparent from the following written description and accompanying figures.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a top elevational view of a device embodying the features of the present invention.

FIG. **2** is a side elevational view of the device shown in FIG. **1**.

FIG. **3** is an opposite end elevational view of the device shown in FIG. **1**.

FIG. **4** is an end elevational view of the device shown in FIG. **1**.

FIG. **5** is a sectional view taken along line **5—5** in FIG. **4**.

FIG. **6** is a top elevational view of an alternative embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. **7** is a side elevational view of the alternative embodiment shown in FIG. **6**.

FIG. **8** is a side elevational view of another alternative embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. **9** is a side elevational view of yet another alternative embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. **10** is a top elevational view of another embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. **11** is a cross-sectional view of the device shown in FIG. **10** taken along line **11—11** as viewed in the direction of the arrows.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

For the purposes of promoting an understanding of the principles of the invention, reference will now be made to the embodiments illustrated in the drawings and specific language will be used to describe the same. It will nevertheless be understood that no limitation of the scope of the invention is thereby intended, such alterations and further modifications in the illustrated device, and such further applications of the principles of the invention as illustrated therein being comtemplated as would normally occur to one skilled in the art to which the invention relates.

A golf device **10** of one embodiment of the present invention is shown in FIG. **1**. The device **10** includes a generally solid body **11** having an end face **13**. A pair of elongated cavities **15** project inwardly into the body **11** from the end face **13**. The cavities **15** are shaped to conform to the outer dimensions of a golf tee T. In the preferred embodiment of the invention, two such cavities **15** are provided to carry a pair of pair of tees T. However, it is contemplated that the body **11** can be enlarged to accommodate more cavities to carry a greater number of golf tees. The cavities **15** are only slightly larger than the golf tees in order to provide firm support for the tees and to prevent them from falling out of the cavities. The cavities may be lined with a foam or similar material that can form a friction fit for the golf tees T inserted therein.

The body **11** further includes a slot **17** that is cut from the top face **19** of the body toward the bottom face **28**. The slot opens at and projects inward from the end face **13**. The slot **17** is intended to receive the stem S of a standard ball marker M, which is of conventional shape and size. The marker M includes a circular disk D with the stems projecting perpendicularly therefrom. The slot **17** has a width that is slightly larger than the outer diameter of the stem S of the ball marker M. The depth of the slot **17** need only be enough to accommodate the length of the stem S of the ball marker M. However, in the present embodiment, the slot **17** is shown as extending entirely from the top surface **19** to the bottom surface **28** of the body **11** (see FIGS. **2** and **4**).

The golf device **10** further includes means for retaining the marker which, in the present embodiment, comprises a pair of retaining clips **21** which are situated on the top face **19** of the body **11**. Each clip includes an arm **24** which is connected at its base **22** to the body at the top face **19**. The tip **23** of each of the arms **24** is preferably wedge-shaped and is not integral with or

connected to the top face **19**. The arm **24** is resiliently flexible so that the tip **23** can be resiliently displaced from the top face **19** of the body **11** to permit passage of the marker disk D.

In use, the ball marker M is inserted into the device **10** with the stem S moving into the slot **17**. The disk D of the marker M contacts the tips **23** of the retaining clips **21** and resiliently displaces the tips away from the top face **19** of the body **11** until the disk D passes fully under the arms **24**. Once the disk D of the marker has cleared the tips **23**, the marker M is firmly retained by the resilient retaining clips **21** between the arms **24** and top face **19**. The tips **23** prevent the marker M from being readily removed from the slot **17** of the golf device **10**. Thus, the distance between the tips **23** of the retaining clips **21** must be slightly less than the outer diameter of the disk D of the ball marker M. In the present embodiment, the distance between the base **22** of the retaining clips **21** is less than the gap between the tips **23** so that the arms **24** angle toward each other. In this manner, the arms must overlap at least some part of the disk D to hold the marker M securely on the golf device **10** until the golfer desires to use the marker. Alternatively, a single clip may be used or the arms of the clip may be sufficiently close to the top face **19** to form a friction fit to hold the marker disk in place.

In another important aspect of the invention, the body **11** of the golf device **10** is formed at one end into a turf repair tool. The body **11** includes a pair of prongs **25** as shown in FIGS. **1** and **2**. The underside or bottom surface of each prong **25** includes a beveled or sloped surface **26** which provides leverage for use as a turf repair tool. Other geometries for the prongs **25** and bevel **26** are contemplated that can function as a greens or turf repair tool.

As shown more clearly in FIG. **2** the golf device **10** includes a belt clip **30** attached thereto. The belt clip **30** allows the golf device **10** to be carried on the belt or in a shirt pocket of the golfer, or at some other convenient location such as on the golf bag. In the preferred embodiment, the belt clip is formed integrally with the body **11**. It is important that the belt clip **30** be formed of a sufficiently resilient material to adequately grip the belt or shirt pocket and support the device **10**.

In an alternative embodiment shown in FIGS. **4** and **5**, a belt clip **30'** is attached to a body **11'** which is identical to the body **11** with the addition of a pair of channels **33** formed in the bottom face **28** of the body. This separate clip **30'** is preferably formed of the same resilient material as the belt clip **30** of the prior embodiment, although it may be composed of a flexible metal or other similar resilient material. In this embodiment, the belt clip **30'** is held in place by a pair of fingers **31** which are spaced apart across the width of the body **11**. As shown more clearly in the detail of FIG. **5**, the finger **31** fits into a channel **33** molded into the body **11'**. Both the fingers **31** and the channels **33** are L-shaped to provide a permanent lock or attachment for the belt clip. Since the belt clip **30'** is formed of a resilient material, the fingers **31** can be readily snapped into the channels **33** in a conventional fashion by slightly deforming the fingers on insertion into the channels. While two fingers **31** and channels **33** are described, a greater number of each may be provided.

The golf device **10** of the present embodiment is most preferably formed of a resilient yet durable plastic that can be readily formed in a standard molding or casting process. Such a plastic may be polypropylene, although other similar materials are contemplated (for instance, a resin or rubber compound). It is also preferable that the device be composed of lightweight material for the convenience of the golfer. The retaining clips **21** and the belt clip **30** must be sufficiently durable to withstand frequent flexing. In the present embodiment the body **11**, including the cavities **15**, slot **17**, clips **21**, prongs **25** and channels **33** are formed in a single piece. The belt clip is separately molded and then snapped into the channels **33** of the body **11**.

The body **11** of the present embodiment is optimally formed as small as possible yet capable of carrying a pair of golf tees and a ball marker, and of functioning as a turf repair tool. For this reason, the tee receiving cavities **15** are angled downwardly and inwardly toward the centerline of the body **11**. The cavities must be separated enough to clear the slot **17**. On the other hand, it is necessary that the body **11** be large enough to provide an adequate gripping surface for the golfer when the turf repair feature of the device is being used. In keeping with these requirements, the golf device of one specific embodiment of the invention is approximately $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide across the end face **13**, with a total length of $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches from the end face to the tip of the prongs **25**. The prongs **25** themselves are approximately $\frac{1}{8}$ inch wide and have a length of about 1/14 inches with a $\frac{3}{8}$ inch gap between the two prongs. The retaining clips **21** used to retain the ball marker M have a length of approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Slot **17** has a width of $\frac{1}{8}$ inch and a length into the body **11** of about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. It is important that the length of the slot **17** be sufficient to permit the disk D of the ball marker M to be fully contained within the retaining clips **21** while the stem S is within the slot **17**. The belt clip **30** can have a length of approximately $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

FIGS. **6** and **7** offer an alternative embodiment of the invention in which a golf device **40** includes a body **41** having an end face **43**. A pair of cavities **45** extend inwardly into the body **41** from the end face **43** to accommodate a pair of golf tees as previously described. The golf device **40** also includes a slot **47** which is similar to the slot **17** of the prior embodiment. In a variation from the first embodiment of the golf device **40** includes a retaining collar **50** formed on the top face **49** of the body **41**. The retaining collar **50** is partially circular in shape with an opening aligned with the slot to permit passage of the marker disk D therethrough. The collar is dimensioned to surround at least the perimeter of a typical ball marker M. The retaining collar **50** includes a lip **52** which has an inner diameter slightly smaller than the diameter of the disk D of the ball marker and is offset from the top face **49** by at least the thickness of the marker disk. Sufficient space must be provided radially inboard of the lip **52** to permit finger or thumb access to the disk D to remove the marker M from the device **40**. The lip **52** is formed into a pair of tabs **54** adjacent the end face **43** of the body. The tabs **54** project slightly inward, as shown in FIG. **6**, as well as slightly downward, as shown in FIG. **7**. The distance between the opposite tabs **54** is slightly less than the diameter of the marker disk D. The retaining collar is integrally formed with the body **41** of the same resilient material so that the tabs **54** will deform slightly to permit the disk D of the ball marker to be pushed or pressed into the retaining collar **50**. Once the ball marker is within the generally circular retaining collar **50** with the stem S extending into the slot **47**, the tabs **54** tend to hold the marker in place.

In another variation from the prior embodiment, the golf device **40** includes a pair of turf repair tool prongs **55**, each having a beveled rib **57** extending along the length of the prong. In addition, the golf device **40** includes a cut back portion **59** at one end of the prongs. This cut back portion increases the surface area of the turf repair prongs **55**.

In still another variation, the golf device **40** of this second embodiment includes an integrally formed belt clip **60**. The clip **60** is formed in the same molding process as the other features of the golf device **40**, including the cavities **45**, the slot **47** and the retaining collar **50**. Each of these features of the device **40** can be integrally formed in a typical plastic molding process.

In another alternative embodiment, shown in FIG. **8**, a separate belt clip **62** is formed in a U-shape to include a resilient hook portion **63** and a retaining portion **64**. The retaining portion **64** is molded into or embedded or fixed in the body **65** of the golf device. Alternatively, the retaining portion **64** may be inserted or snapped into a slot formed end face of the body.

In still another alternative, shown in FIG. **9**, another separate U-shaped clip **70** includes a resilient hook portion **71**, a retaining portion **72** and a pair of turf repair prongs **73**. The retaining portion **72** is embedded or fixed within the body **75** when the golf device is molded. The respective clips **62** and **70** of these alternative designs may be composed of metal or plastic, or some other material that is resilient and capable of being molded in situ within a plastic molded body. It is important, however, that the prongs **73** be sufficiently rigid to fulfill their intended function as a turf repair tool without excessive bending. This can be accomplished by forming the clip **70** such that the thickness of at least the prongs **73** is greater than the thickness of the hook portion **71**, which latter portion must be resiliently flexible.

In a further embodiment of the invention, illustrated in FIGS. **10** and **11**, a device **80** incorporates an alternative structure for supporting the golf tees T. The device **80** includes a body **81** that is similar in construction to the body **10** shown in FIG. **1**. A pair of resilient clips **91** are provided on the top face of body **81** to retain the ball spot S. A pair of prongs **95** are integral with the body **81** to form the turf repair tool. In a variation from the previous embodiments, a pair of C-shaped clips **85** project from the side walls of the body **81**. The C-clips **85** include a channel **86** and the body **81** includes a co-extensive channel **87** in the side walls that are adapted to accept a golf tee T therein. The C-clips **85** need not be resilient since the golf tees simply slide along the channel **87** into the channel **86** of the clips **85**.

While the invention has been illustrated and described in detail in the drawings and foregoing description, the same is to be considered as illustrative and not restrictive in character, it being understood that only the preferrred embodiments have been shown and described and that all changes and modifications that come within the spirit of the invention are desired to be protected.

What is claimed is:

1. A golf device comprising:

a one-piece body having a top face, a bottom face and an end face;

a turf repair tool including a pair of prongs extending from said body opposite said end face;

said body defining a number of elongated cavities extending from said end face into said one-piece body, each of said number of cavities being sized to snugly receive a golf tee therein;

said body further defining a slot having an opening at said top face and at said end face for slidably receiving the stem of a ball marker therein;

retaining means for retaining the disk of the ball marker at said top face when the stem is within said slot, said retaining means being resiliently displaceable to permit insertion and removal of the ball marker disk from the golf device; and

a belt clip disposed on said one-piece body at said bottom face.

2. The golf device of claim **1**, wherein said retaining means includes:

at least one resilient arm affixed at one end to said top face and having a tip at an opposite free end disposed relative to said slot to retain the disk of the marker under said at least one arm when the stem of the marker is in said slot, said tip further being disposed sufficiently close to said top face whereby the disk of the marker must contact the tip to resiliently displace the tip from the top face to permit insertion or removal of the marker from said retaining means.

3. The golf device of claim **2**, wherein said retaining means includes a pair of said resilient arms affixed at opposite sides of said slot, the tips of each of said pair of arms being separated by a distance less than the diameter of the ball marker disk but great enough to permit finger access therebetween for removal of the marker disk.

4. The golf device of claim **1**, wherein said retaining means includes:

a partially circular collar formed at said top surface around said slot, said collar including;

a lip having a diameter sized to overlap the perimeter of the disk of the marker when the stem of the marker is within said slot, said lip being disposed from said top face at a height at least equal to the thickness of the ball marker disk; and

said collar defining an opening at said end face for passage of the marker disk therethrough; and

a pair of tabs at opposite sides of said opening, the distance between the tabs being less than the diameter of the marker disk, said tabs being resiliently deformable to permit insertion into or removal from said collar of the marker disk by deforming said tabs.

5. The golf device of claim **1**, wherein said belt clip is integrally formed with said one-piece body.

6. The golf device of claim **1**, further including means for engaging said belt clip to said one-piece body at said bottom face in snap-fit engagement.

7. The golf device of claim **1**, wherein said belt clip includes:

a resilient hook portion; and

a retaining portion, wherein said retaining portion is fixed within said body.

8. The golf device of claim **1**, wherein:

said belt clip is generally U-shaped in which one leg of the U-shape is a resilient hook portion and the other leg includes a retaining portion and said pair of prongs of the turf repair tool, said retaining portion being fixed within said body.

9. A golf device comprising:

a one-piece body having a top face, a bottom face, a pair of opposite side faces and an end face;

a turf repair tool including a pair of prongs extending from said body opposite said end face;

said body defining a number of elongated channels in said side faces extending from said end face, each of said number of channels being sized to snugly receive a golf tee therein;

said body further defining a slot having an opening at said top face and at said end face for slidably receiving the stem of a ball marker therein;

retaining means for retaining the disk of the ball marker at said top face when the stem is within said slot, said retaining means being resiliently displaceable to permit insertion and removal of the ball marker disk from the golf device; and

a belt clip disposed on said one-piece body at said bottom face.

10. The golf device of claim **9**, wherein said body includes a generally C-shaped clip integral with said body at each of said side walls, said clip including a channel therethrough co-extensive with one of said number of channels.

* * * * *